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ABSTRACT

To clarify the role expectations held for the cooperative special education director in North Dakota, questionnaires were sent to 30 public school superintendents, 22 special education directors, and 30 special education teachers. Results of the questionnaire showed that the rankings of the seven task performance areas identified in the survey were (in descending order of importance): personnel, curriculum and instruction, finance, superintendent relationships, public relations, legislative responsibility, and research and continued study. The rankings for personal characteristics of the director (in descending order of importance) were: task-related characteristics, personality, intellectual ability, social characteristics, social background, and physical characteristics. The third part of the survey concerned 20 selected administrative situations. Among findings for this section was that all groups agreed that the cooperative directors always should accept responsibility for developing long range plans for the special education program. The authors' conclude with 10 recommendations such as the need for additional research and evaluation. The questionnaire and references are appended. (PHR)

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EXPECTATIONS FOR THE ROLE OF COOPERATIVE SPECIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR

by

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Grand Forks, North Dakota

1979

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FOREWARD

The Bureau of Educational Research and Services attempts to make available to appropriate audiences the results of research activities of students, faculty, and staff. This is another in the series of monographs of research that has been conducted at the University of North Dakota's Center for Teaching and Learning.

Robert Duncan and Richard Hill have sought an answer to several questions posed that are directed towards the title of this work, "Expectations for the Role of Cooperative Special Education Director."

As schools are more and more involved in providing special education services for students, the management of special services takes on a different set of expectations. This is particularly true in the smaller educational setting where cooperation between and among schools is a requisite.

Duncan and Hill have arrived at several conclusions from their study, and offer a series of recommendations that range from the need for additional study to implications for college and university preparation programs for special education directors. There is little doubt but that special services directors must bring a variety of skills to the job. They are both special educators and educational administrators; they serve both students and staff, the school district and the whole educational enterprise. The task before them is a significantly important one and must be considered accordingly as positions are opened and subsequently filled.

Larry L. Smiley
Director
Bureau of Educational Research and Services

March, 1979

PURPOSE AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this study was to attempt to clarify the role expectations held for the cooperative special education director in the State of North Dakota as perceived by public school superintendents, public school special education teachers, public school special education teachers, and public school education directors themselves. The cooperative special education director faces diverse expectations from many groups both in and out of the realm of the public educational setting. Special education and regular teachers, students, parents, professional organizations, special interest groups, school administration, and state and federal departments all have their own expectations for the cooperative special education director. Moreover, the cooperative special education director belongs to a developing professional group which has its own perception of appropriate role expectations. The cooperative special education director must develop and maintain a working relationship with the district superintendent and special education director. The school superintendent is the manager of the district in which the cooperative director operates the special education program and it is critical that each of the two administrators understand the role and requirements of the other. The special education teachers also must understand the role of the cooperative special education director because the director manages the very program in which the teachers teach. The cooperative director's ability to correctly perceive, influence, and work with the expectations of the school superintendent and the special education teachers is critical in determining the director's

potential to meet those expectations.

A three section questionnaire was constructed. The first two sections asked the respondent to rank in order of importance seven role performances and then six personal characteristics commonly associated with the role of the cooperative special education director. The third section asked the respondent to complete twenty forced choice questions dealing with typical administrative problem situations the cooperative special education director may face.

The questionnaire was sent to thirty public school superintendents, thirty public school special education teachers, and all twenty-two public school special education directors in the State of North Dakota.

The analysis of the data was completed by considering one comparison. Do public school superintendents, public school special education directors, and public school special education teachers agree with each other on the role expectations for the cooperative special education director? The comparison was made on the data gathered from all three sections of the questionnaire. The data were tested by sophisticated statistical analysis which will not be reported here in all their detail. Instead this summary will represent only mean or average responses of the group and it will represent differing perceptions in chart form. Often, in the study, means between groups were found to be similar to one another even though variance within groups was considerable. This variance was not reported in this monograph. Nevertheless the reader should be aware that different individual perceptions did exist.

PRESENTATION REPORT

The data reported in this chapter represent the responses of 82 participants. All twenty-two of the special education directors in North Dakota elected to participate, all thirty of the sample of school superintendents elected to participate, and all thirty of the sample of special education teachers elected to participate in this study.

The first research question asked was, "Do Public School Special Education Directors, Public School Superintendents, and Public School Special Education Teachers in North Dakota agree on the Relative Importance of Seven Role Performance Related to the Position of Cooperative Special Education Director?"

Participants in the study were asked to rank seven task performance areas of the cooperative special education director in order of importance from 1 to 7, with 1 being the most important area and 7 being the least important area. The results of those rankings follows:

Tables 1 and 2 summarize the composite rankings of the seven task performance areas. The composite rankings, in descending order of importance, were:

1. Personnel
2. Curriculum and Instruction
3. Finance
4. Superintendent Relationships
5. Public Relations
6. Legislative Responsibility
7. Research and Continued Study

TABLE 1

TASK PERFORMANCE RANKINGS: SUMMARY OF RANK ORDER BY MEANS ASSIGNED TO THE SEVEN TASK PERFORMANCE AREAS BY ALL GROUPS IN THE SAMPLE POPULATION

	Directors	Superintendents	Teachers	Composite Rank Order
Curriculum and Instruction	3.72	3.00	2.43	2.98
Finance	3.04	3.30	4.53	3.68
Legislative Responsibility	5.09	4.60	4.90	4.84
Personnel	2.81	2.50	2.40	2.54
Public Relations	4.36	4.90	4.53	4.62
Research and Continued Study	6.13	5.70	5.00	5.56
Superintendent Relations	2.81	4.00	4.20	3.75

TABLE 2

TASK PERFORMANCE RANKINGS: RANK ORDER SUMMARY OF THE SEVEN TASK PERFORMANCE AREAS AS RANKED BY EACH GROUP IN THE SAMPLE POPULATION

Rank Order	Directors	Superintendents	Teachers	Composite Total
1	G	D	D	D
2	D	A	A	A
3	B	B	G	B
4	A	G	BE*	G
5	E	C		E
6	C	E	C	C
7	F	F	F	F

*Finance and Public Relations both had a Mean of 4.533

Key: A=Curriculum and Instruction
B=Finance
C=Legislative Responsibility
D=Personnel
E=Public Relations
F=Research and Continued Study
G=Superintendent Relationships

Superintendents and special education teachers agreed in the rank order of curriculum and instruction (1), finance (2), and research and continued study (7) but interchanged the remaining four rank orders. Directors agreed with the Superintendents on the rank order of finance (3) and research and continued study (7) but interchanged public relations and legislative responsibility. The directors and superintendents did not agree on the rank order of the remaining task performances. Directors and teachers agreed on the rank order of public relations (5), legislative responsibility (6), and research and continued study (7) but disagreed on the rank orders of the remaining four task performance areas. Superintendents, teachers, and directors all agreed on the rank order of research and continued study (7).

The second research question asked was, "Do Public School Special Education Directors, Public School Superintendents, and Public School Special Education Teachers in North Dakota Agree on the Relative Importance of Six Personal Characteristics Related to the Position of Cooperative Special Education Director?"

Participants in the study were asked to rank, from 1 to 6, six personal characteristics of the cooperative special education director, with 1 being the most important characteristic and 6 being the least important.

Tables 3 and 4 summarize the rankings of the six personal characteristics. The composite rankings, in descending order of importance, were:

1. Task-Related Characteristics
2. Personality

TABLE 3

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS RANKINGS: SUMMARY OF RANK ORDER BY MEANS ASSIGNED TO THE SIX PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS AREAS BY ALL GROUPS IN THE SAMPLE POPULATION

	Directors	Superintendents	Teachers	Composite Rank Order
Intellectual Ability	2.72	2.23	2.90	2.67
Personality	2.27	2.23	2.63	2.39
Physical Characteristics	5.77	5.43	5.77	5.58
Social Background	5.13	4.83	4.66	4.85
Social Characteristics	2.95	3.66	3.00	3.23
Task-Related Characteristics	2.13	2.56	2.20	2.13

TABLE 4

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS RANKINGS: SUMMARY OF RANK ORDER ASSIGNED TO THE SIX PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS AREAS BY ALL GROUPS IN THE SAMPLE POPULATION

Rank Order	Directors	Superintendents	Teachers	Composite Total
1	F	AB*	F	F
2	B		B	B
3	A	F	A	A
4	E	E	E	E
5	D	D	D	D
6	C	C	C	C

*Intellectual Ability and Personality both had a Mean of 2.333

Key: A=Intellectual Ability
B=Personality
C=Physical Characteristics
D=Social Background
E=Social Characteristics
F=Task-related Characteristics

3. Intellectual Ability

4. Social Characteristics

5. Social Background

6. Physical Characteristics

Superintendents, teachers, and directors all agreed on the rank order of social characteristics (4), social background (5), and physical characteristics (6). Directors and teachers agreed that task-related characteristics were the most important (1) of the six personal characteristics while superintendents ranked intellectual ability and personality as most important (1), and task-related characteristics as third most important (3) of the six personal characteristics. Directors and teachers interchanged the rank order of intellectual ability and personality as second in importance.

The third research question asked was: "Do Public School Special Education Directors, Public School Superintendents, and Public Schoo. Special Education Teachers in North Dakota Agree on the Proper Course of Action for the Cooperative Special Education Director to Follow in Administrative Situations as Posed by Twenty Selected Questions?"

Part three of the questionnaire (Appendix A) asked the participants to respond to twenty selected administrative situations. The responses were always the same five choices. For the purposes of data analysis, the responses were scaled as Always Should = 1, Probably Should = 2, May or May Not = 3, Probably Should Not = 4, and Never Should = 5.

Table 5 lists the twenty administrative situations and reports the responses of the superintendents, teachers, and directors. The

letter "S" indicates the mean on average responses of the superintendents, the letter "T" indicates the mean or average responses of the teachers, the letter "D" indicates the mean or average responses of the directors, and the letter "X" indicates the composite mean or average of all three groups.

TABLE 5

SUMMARY OF THE MEAN RESPONSES TO TWENTY SELECTED ADMINISTRATIVE SITUATIONS

Administrative Situation	Role	Always Should	Probably Should	May or May Not	Probably Should Not	Never Should
1. The cooperative special education director should accept responsibility for developing long-range plans for the special ed. program.	Directors	D				
	Superintendents	S				
	Teachers	T				
	Total	X				
2. The cooperative special education director should work with superintendents in organizing programs which provide for continuity.	Directors	D				
	Superintendents	S				
	Teachers	T				
	Total	X				
3. The cooperative special education director should serve as a consultant for curriculum development and revision.	Directors		D			
	Superintendents	S				
	Teachers	T				
	Total	X				

TABLE 5 Continued

Administrative Situation	Role	Always Should	Probably Should	May or May Not	Probably Should Not	Never Should
4. The cooperative special education director should serve as a consultant to special ed. depts. in colleges and universities in defining needs and resources.	Directors	D				
	Superintendents		S			
	Teachers		T			
	Total		X			
5. The cooperative special education director should assure that the district has a policy regarding all special ed. activity (e.g., screening, placement).	Directors	D				
	Superintendents	S				
	Teachers	T				
	Total	X				
6. The cooperative special education director should establish a channel of communication with all district personnel who deal directly with the department.	Directors	D				
	Superintendents	S				
	Teachers	T				
	Total	X				

TABLE 5 Continued

Administrative Situation	Role	Always Should	Probably Should	May or May Not	Probably Should Not	Never Should
7. The cooperative special education director should assure that all district schools that house special ed. pupils are following all established special ed. regulations.	Directors		D			
	Superintendents		S			
	Teachers		T			
	Total		X			
8. The cooperative special education director should plan building and district-wide special ed. staff meetings.	Directors		D			
	Superintendents		S			
	Teachers		T			
	Total		X			
9. The cooperative special education director should assume responsibility for the teaching-learning process in special ed. classes.	Directors		D			
	Superintendents		S			
	Teachers		T			
	Total		X			

TABLE 5 Continued

Administrative Situation	Role	Always Should	Probably Should	May or May Not	Probably Should Not	Never Should
10. The cooperative special education director should be expected to develop a system of evaluation and supervision for all special ed. personnel.	Directors Superintendents Teachers Total	D S T X				
11. The cooperative special education director should assure that consulting services (psychiatric, pediatric-neurological, etc.) are available to the district upon request.	Directors Superintendents Teachers Total	D S T X				
12. The cooperative special education director should establish schedules for special ed. personnel whose services are utilized by more than one school (e.g., Speech Pathologist, School Psychologist).	Directors Superintendents Teachers Total		D S T X			

TABLE 5 Continued

Administrative Situation	Role	Always Should	Probably Should	May or May Not	Probably Should Not	Never Should
13. The cooperative special education director should assure that all special ed. programs can be adapted to individual needs of the students.	Directors		D			
	Superintendents		S			
	Teachers		T			
	Total		X			
14. The cooperative special education director should assure that all necessary pupil accounting and records are established and maintained according to regulations.	Directors	D				
	Superintendents	S				
	Teachers		T			
	Total		X			
15. The cooperative special education director should act as liaison between superintendent and offices of federal, state, county, and city government regarding special ed.	Directors		D			
	Superintendents		S			
	Teachers	T				
	Total		X			

TABLE 5 Continued

Administrative Situation	Role	Always Should	Probably Should	May or May Not	Probably Should Not	Never Should
16. The cooperative special education director should assure distribution of all special ed. information and materials to be used by administrators, teachers, pupils, and guidance personnel.	Directors		D			
	Superintendents		S			
	Teachers		T			
	Total		X			
17. The cooperative special education director should be involved when a district hires special ed. personnel.	Directors	D				
	Superintendents		S			
	Teachers		T			
	Total		X			
18. The cooperative special education director should vigorously pursue all sources of special ed. revenue.	Directors		D			
	Superintendents	S				
	Teachers		T			
	Total		X			

TABLE 5 Continued

Administrative Situation	Role	Always Should	Probably Should	May or May Not	Probably Should Not	Never Should
19. The cooperative special education director should coordinate all special ed. student transportation.	Directors			D		
	Superintendents		S			
	Teachers		T			
	Total		X			
20. The cooperative special education director should accept responsibility for implementing long-range plans for the special ed. program.	Directors	D				
	Superintendents	S				
	Teachers		T			
	Total	X				

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The conclusions, based upon the analysis of the data collected, were divided into three parts:

Part A. Conclusions dealing with the analysis of the data that related to the rankings of the seven performance tasks of the cooperative special education director.

Part B. Conclusions dealing with the analysis of the data that related to the rankings of the six personal characteristics of the cooperative special education director.

Part C. Conclusions dealing with the analysis of the data that related to the responses to the twenty selected administrative situations.

Conclusions Related to the Rankings of the Seven Performance Tasks of the Cooperative Special Education Director (Part A).

The conclusions highlight the areas of consensus and differences among the respondents in their rankings of the seven performance tasks of the cooperative special education director.

A-1. Curriculum and instruction as a task performance area was ranked highest by special education teachers and lowest by special education directors when ranks of the three groups of respondents were compared. Overall, superintendents and teachers both saw it as the second most important of the performance tasks of the cooperative special education director. The composite ranking also placed it second in importance.

A-2. Finance, as a task performance area, was ranked highest by the directors and lowest by the teachers. Directors and superintendents demonstrated agreement on the overall ranking of this task by ranking it third most important of the performance tasks of the cooperative special education director. The composite ranking also placed it third in importance.

A-3. Superintendents ranked legislative responsibility, as a task performance area, higher than did either teachers or directors. All three groups ranked it in the lower half of the seven ranked. The composite ranking placed it sixth in importance.

A-4. Special education teachers ranked personnel, as a task performance area, the highest and directors ranked it the lowest. Overall, teachers and superintendents agreed with the composite ranking of this task by ranking it as the most important performance task of the cooperative special education director.

A-5. Public relations, as a task performance, was ranked highest by the directors and lowest by the superintendents. Not one of the three groups placed it in the top half of the seven tasks. The composite ranking placed it fifth in importance as a performance task area of the cooperative director.

A-6. Research and continued study was the seventh ranked task of the seven performance tasks. Total agreement existed among all three groups as to the ranking of this task.

A-7. Directors ranked superintendent relationships, as a task performance area, higher than did teachers and superintendents. Directors ranked it as the most important performance task of the cooperative special education director. Superintendents ranked it

fourth while special education teachers ranked it third. The composite ranking placed it fourth in importance.

Conclusions Related to the Rankings of the Six Personal Characteristics of the Cooperative Special Education Director (Part B).

These conclusions highlight the areas of consensus and differences among the respondents in their rankings of the six personal characteristics of the cooperative special education director.

B-1. Task-related characteristics was ranked the most important of the personal characteristics in the composite rankings. There was a slight difference among the groups, however, with directors and teachers ranking it first and superintendents ranking it third, when the rankings of the three respondent groups were compared.

B-2. Directors and teachers agreed in their rankings of personality as a personal characteristic. Both groups ranked this task second in importance. Superintendents ranked both personality and intellectual ability as most important, therefore there is no second most important task identified by that group.

B-3. Intellectual ability was ranked third most important of the personal characteristics in the composite rankings. There was a difference among the rankings of the three groups with teachers and directors both ranking this task third and superintendents ranking it and personality as first.

B-4. Special education directors, special education teachers, and school superintendents all agreed on the composite rankings of

social characteristics, social background, and physical characteristics as the fourth, fifth, and sixth most important, respectively, of the six personal characteristics of the cooperative special education director.

Conclusions Related to the Responses to Twenty Selected Administrative Situations (Part C).

These conclusions detail the areas of consensus and differences among the respondents in their responses to twenty selected administrative situations.

C-1. Special education directors, special education teachers and school superintendents agree that the cooperative director always should accept responsibility for developing long-range plans for the special education program. All three groups were positive in their reaction to this situation. This may be because they feel that the cooperative director is in the best position to ascertain and articulate what direction the special education program should be heading.

C-2. The cooperative special education director always should work with superintendents in organizing programs which provide for continuity. All three groups were positive in their reactions to this situation. This may reflect the attitude that all three groups recognize the importance of cooperation among administrative staff members.

C-3. The cooperative special education director probably should serve as a consultant for curriculum development and revision. Superintendents and teachers were more positive in their responses to this situation than were directors.

C-4. The cooperative special education director probably should serve as a consultant to special education departments in colleges and universities in defining needs and resources. Directors stressed this situation more than other respondent groups, but still received strong support from superintendents and teachers.

C-5. The cooperative special education director always should assure that the district has a policy regarding all special education activity (e.g.,screening, placement). Directors were positive on this issue and received strong support from the superintendents and teachers.

C-6. The cooperative special education director always should establish a channel of communication with all district personnel who deal directly with the department.

C-7. The cooperative special education director always should accept the responsibility to assure that all district schools that house special education pupils are following all established special education regulations. All respondent groups concurred.

C-8. The cooperative special education director probably should plan building and district-wide special education staff meetings. All three groups were in agreement in their responses to this situation.

C-9. Special education teachers as a group did not agree with the group responses of superintendents and directors regarding the degrees to which the cooperative special education director should assume responsibility for the teaching-learning process in special education classes. Teachers tended to agree that the cooperative

director may or may not assume this responsibility while directors and superintendents tended to be more positive on this issue by indicating that the cooperative director probably should assume this responsibility. This may be because some teachers feel that the classroom is their area of responsibility. It would be prudent for the cooperative directors to assess their own situations and investigate perceptions of others in the cooperative before deciding a course of action on this issue.

C-10. The cooperative special education director should be expected to develop a system of evaluation and supervision for all special education personnel. Directors were most positive in their responses and received strong support from superintendents and teachers.

C-11. Special education teachers responded most positively as to the degree to which cooperative special education directors should assure that consulting services (e.g., psychiatric, pediatric-neurological) were available to the district upon request. Teachers felt that the cooperative director always should accept this responsibility while superintendents and directors felt that the cooperative director probably should accept this responsibility.

C-12. Special education teachers were in disagreement with the superintendents and special education directors regarding whether or not the cooperative special education director should establish schedules for special education personnel whose services are utilized by more than one school (e.g., speech pathologist, school psychologist). Teachers felt that the cooperative directors may or may not accept this responsibility while superintendents and directors felt that the cooperative director probably should

assume this responsibility. This expectation suggests that perhaps teachers felt that they share, or building principals share, the responsibility to develop a flexible schedule for itinerant personnel to fit the teacher or client needs. The local cooperative may have to assess their own situation and investigate perceptions of others in the cooperative before deciding a course of action on this issue.

C-13. The cooperative special education director probably should assure that all special education programs can be adapted to the individual needs of the students.

C-14. Special education directors were more positive in their responses to the situation regarding the degree to which cooperative special education directors should assure that all necessary pupil accounting and records are established and maintained according to regulations. Directors felt that the cooperative director always should assume this responsibility while superintendents and teachers felt that the cooperative director probably should assume this responsibility.

C-15. The cooperative special education director probably should act as a liaison between the superintendent and the offices of federal, state, county, and city government regarding special education.

C-16. There was a consistent agreement as to the degree which the cooperative special education director should assure the distribution of all special education information and materials to be used by administrators,teachers, pupils, and guidance personnel. The three groups felt that the cooperative director probably should accept this responsibility.

C-17. The cooperative special education director always should be involved when a district hires special education personnel. Special education directors were very positive in their reaction to this situation. Superintendents felt that the cooperative director probably should be involved in this task. Teachers, although not as positive in their response as directors, felt that the cooperative directors may have to assess their own situations in deciding a course of action on this issue.

C-18. Special education teachers and school superintendents were quite positive in their responses to what degree they felt the cooperative special education director should vigorously pursue all sources of special education revenue. Both groups felt that the cooperative director always should assume this responsibility while directors felt that the cooperative director probably should assume this responsibility.

C-19. The cooperative special education director may or may not coordinate all special education student transportation. This is an issue which is becoming very important to school districts and one with which state legislative members will be dealing during future sessions. The respondents indicated that there is not a definite policy regarding the responsibility for special education transportation coordination.

C-20. The superintendents were very positive in their responses to whether or not the cooperative special education director should accept responsibility for implementing long-range plans for the special education program. Directors also responded very positively by indicating that the cooperative director always should assume

this responsibility. Teachers were less positive in their responses and felt that the cooperative director probably should assume this responsibility. Directors should be aware that all teachers are not positive on this issue and should evaluate the local cooperative situation before electing a course of action.

Limitations of the Study

It is the opinion of the writer that the analysis of the data collected supports the conclusions reached. However, there were limitations to the study which should be recognized.

One limitation was the fact that only a sample of the school superintendents and special education teachers in North Dakota were asked to participate in the study. The study is limited by the potential errors of sampling procedures.

Another limitation was that the study was confined to the State of North Dakota. Conclusions and recommendations must also be confined to North Dakota because of this limitation.

Writers' Recommendations

The results of the writers' interpretation of the literature reviewed and analysis of the data collected lead to the following recommendations:

1. Additional research should be done on the position of cooperative special education administrator in North Dakota and throughout the United States. Each of the twenty administrative situations in Section A of the questionnaire (see Appendix A) could be researched in much more depth. The situation listed in C-19, student transportation, is in particular need of more definitive direction. Conclusion C-12, establishing schedules for itinerant personnel, is a situation of strong disagreement. This situation needs to be further clarified through more extensive attention.

2. Cooperative boards must be aware of the wide range of expectations held for and the complex tasks of the cooperative director. The board must support the director with proper backing of decisions which the director makes. The board must also support the director by providing the position with a salary comparable to the far-ranging duties expected of the director.

3. Cooperative directors need to make a self-assessment of their utilization of time on the job. Review of research indicates they spend greater percentages of their time on ministerial tasks which are of lesser importance. More time needs to be spent in the area of supervision and coordination of instruction.

4. Graduate school programs which presently offer programs and in-service seminars in special education administration should

continually evaluate these programs to see if they are meeting the needs of practicing and future special education directors. The courses of study should be designed specifically for special education administration and not be merely an extension of existing general school administration programs. The courses of study should emphasize the development of theoretical perspectives related to social systems,teacher subculture,client control and management, organizational adaptations,maintenance of organizational stability, finance, and research techniques and interpretation. This recommendation is based both on the results of this study and related research.

5. The Department of Public Instruction, in conjunction with institutions of higher education in North Dakota, should consider a much more extensive service of seminars each year than is now presented to provide staff development activities for special education directors in the state and to assist them in meeting the certification renewal requirements.

6. The North Dakota Association of School Administrators and the Department of Public Instruction in North Dakota should consider a series of seminars which would bring regular school administrators and special education administrators together to provide both groups with an opportunity to orient themselves to the role expectations of each group. It would seem sensible that the two administrative groups which work so closely together should be fully aware of the expectations of the other.

7. Graduate school programs which prepare general school administrators but do not have provisions for special education administration training should make attempts to establish courses of

study which will specifically meet the needs of future and practicing special education administrators. (This recommendation is based on the results of this study and related research.) The courses of study designed specifically for special education administration should emphasize the development of theoretical perspectives related to social systems, teacher subculture, client control and management, organizational adaptations, maintenance of organizational stability, finance, and research techniques and interpretation.

8. Potential and active special education administrators need to make an honest self-assessment of their abilities and interests. They need to ask themselves if they have the capabilities to function in the multi-faceted position which demands flexibility from the administrators in meeting the variety of expectations held for the position. They need also to ask themselves if they possess the intellectual ability, personality, and task-related characteristics required of the administrator in order to function effectively.

9. Boards in North Dakota, when hiring a cooperative special education director, should emphasize personnel characteristics of task-related characteristics, personality, and intellectual ability and should give less attention to social background and physical characteristics. The Board should look for a person who possesses knowledge, understanding, and ability to handle administrative responsibilities in personnel, curriculum and instruction, finance, and research.

10. Certification requirements for the cooperative special education administrator in North Dakota should be reviewed. The

raising of these standards should receive serious consideration from the following standpoints. First, special education administrators should have a minimum of at least a Masters Degree in Educational Administration. Second, the special education administrator should have basic preparation in at least two areas of the special education field other than administration. Third, provisions should be considered which allow for the continual professional growth and development through the use of workshops, in-service training, allowance for visitation travel to other special education cooperatives throughout the United States, and sabbatical leaves of absence. It is strongly recommended that the special education administrators holds, or is in the process of obtaining, an advanced degree in special education administration. (These recommendations are based on this study and related research.)

As a result of this study, the writer concluded that the role expectations held for the cooperative special education administrator are demanding and wide-ranging in nature. The expectations can vary from one setting to another and, because of the rapid change which exists in special education at the present and into the predictable future, these expectations change from year to year. Because of this constant change and flexibility, it is essential that special education administrators be constantly reviewing, assessing, and updating their skills. It is also very important that much research in special education administration be undertaken and published in the forthcoming years. This position is a rapidly growing one and important in the total education structure, and thus, it must be supported with proper study and information.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE: COOPERATIVE SPECIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR

QUESTIONNAIRE

COOPERATIVE SPECIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR

SECTION A - Expectations for Performance

Listed below are seven performance characteristics which may be considered when selecting a cooperative special education director. Please rank these characteristics from 1 to 7 in their order of importance. Number 1 would identify the characteristic you believe to be most important; number 2 would identify the characteristic you believe to be second in importance; and so on. Please rank all characteristics, using each number only once.

____ Curriculum and Instruction (development, evaluation, supervision, innovation)

____ Finance (budgeting, accounting, revenue procurement)

____ Legislative Responsibility (competent in law; facilitates successful contact with local, state, and federal legislative bodies)

____ Personnel (staff development, staff selection, staff supervision)

____ Public Relations (works with press, establishes good communications, knows community)

____ Research and Continued Professional Study (informed of trends, innovations, planning)

____ Superintendent Relationships (cooperative, knows proper role, builds working rapport with superintendents)

SECTION B - Expectations for Personal Characteristics

The following are six personal characteristics which may be considered when selecting a cooperative special education director. Please rank these characteristics from 1 to 6 in their order of importance. Number 1 would identify the characteristic you believe to be most important; number 2 would identify the characteristic you believe to be second in importance; and so on. Please rank all characteristics, using each number only once.

____ Intellectual Ability (judgment, scholarship)

____ Personality (enthusiasm, confidence, objectivity, etc.)

____ Physical Characteristics (age, appearance, energy level, weight, health record, etc.)

____ Social Background (education, social status, mobility, etc.)

____ Social Characteristics (tact, popularity, interpersonal skills, etc.)

____ Task-Related Characteristics (stability, flexibility, reliability, drive, etc.)

SECTION C - Expectations for Administrative Situations

The following statements relate to your expectations of the cooperative special education director in certain administrative situations. Please complete each statement by checking the one response you feel is most correct. For example, if you feel the cooperative special education director may or may not be present at student staffings,you would check that response,as shown in item 1.

The Cooperative Special Education Director . . .

1. ____ always should
____ probably should
____ may or may not
____ probably should not
____ never should
accept responsibility for developing long-range plans for the special education program.

2. ____ always should
____ probably should
____ may or may not
____ probably should not
____ never should
work with superintendents in organizing programs which provide for continuity.

3. ____ always should
____ probably should
____ may or may not
____ probably should not
____ never should
serve as a consultant for curriculum development and revision.

4. ____ always should
____ probably should
____ may or may not
____ probably should not
____ never should
serve as a consultant to special education departments in colleges and universities in defining needs and resources.

5. ____ always should
____ probably should
____ may or may not
____ probably should not
____ never should
assure that the district has a policy regarding all special education activity (e.g., screening, placement).

6. ____ always should
____ probably should
____ may or may not
____ probably should not
____ never should
establish a channel of communication with all district personnel who deal directly with the department.

7. ___ always should
___ probably should
___ may or may not
___ probably should not
___ never should

assure that all district schools that house special education pupils are following all established special education regulations.

8. ___ always should
___ probably should
___ may or may not
___ probably should not
___ never should

plan building and district-wide special education staff meetings.

9. ___ always should
___ probably should
___ may or may not
___ probably should not
___ never should

assume responsibility for the teaching-learning process in special education classes.

10. ___ always should
___ probably should
___ may or may not
___ probably should not
___ never should

be expected to develop a system of evaluation and supervision for all special education personnel.

11. ___ always should
___ probably should
___ may or may not
___ probably should not
___ never should

assure that consulting services (Psychiatric, pediatric-neurological, etc.) are available to the district upon request.

12. ___ always should
___ probably should
___ may or may not
___ probably should not
___ never should

establish schedules for special education personnel whose services are utilized by more than one school (e.g., speech pathologist, school psychologist).

13. ___ always should
___ probably should
___ may or may not
___ probably should not
___ never should

assure that all special education programs can be adapted to the individual needs of students.

14. ___ always should
___ probably should
___ may or may not
___ probably should not
___ never should

assure that all necessary pupil accounting and records are established and maintained according to regulations.

15. ___ always should
___ probably should
___ may or may not
___ probably should not
___ never should

act as a liaison between the superintendent and the offices of federal, state, county and city government regarding special education.

16. ___ always should
___ probably should
___ may or may not
___ probably should not
___ never should

assure the distribution of all special education information and materials to be used by administrators, teachers, pupils, parents, and guidance personnel.

17. ___ always should
___ probably should
___ may or may not
___ probably should not
___ never should

be involved when a district hires special education personnel.

18. ___ always should
___ probably should
___ may or may not
___ probably should not
___ never should

vigorously pursue all sources of special education revenue.

19. ___ always should
___ probably should
___ may or may not
___ probably should not
___ never should

coordinate all special education student transportation.

20. ___ always should
___ probably should
___ may or may not
___ probably should not
___ never should

accept responsibility for implementing long-range plans for the special education program.

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